

# The Pearl

*Words & Music by Metaphor*

## THE OPEN ROAD

*If you go down into Egypt and bring back the one pearl that lies in the sea, guarded by the loud-breathing wurm, then you shall put on your robe and the mantle that goes upon it...and you shall be heir to our kingdom. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, III*

And the light is bright, brighter than a million suns. An ordinary sight, if this is where you're from. A many colored coat, and rings upon my hands. A diamond at my throat, fierce power at my command. When I could pull my weight, they gave me a sacred goal, the lure of the good and the great, a chance to prove my soul. They sent me off in search of a pearl, so true it has no price, guarded by a horrible wurm, in Egypt, land of flesh and sense and spice (and everything nice). I wanna hit the highway, to feel the wind in my mane. I wanna see new places, where no one knows my name. In the deep of night I waken, fear I toss and scorn I turn. I don't want to leave forsaken, my turn, my turn, my turn. I don't want to be unfaithful, unworthy of love at the last. I don't want to be ungrateful, or fail at my task, or fail at my task. Here I behold my loves, engraved upon my heart, and promise not to sleep or forget, in all of the time that we're apart. And here I will take my oath, swear by the stupidity of youth, I will achieve my part, by cunning, claw, fist or tooth (if that's not too uncouth). Here are my walking shoes, here is my bag, my coat, my staff. Here is the open road, echoing a silent, sneaking laugh.

## BRUISES AND BLISTERS

*I left the East and in the company of two couriers, went down into Egypt. The way was hard and dangerous, for I was young to tread it. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, IV*

First they took my wallet, then they took my rings, then they killed my friends. What ruin did I bring? Oh Ma, what have I done? So they ripped my clothes, and they beat my bones. I can't find my eyes, they laughed at my cries. Barefoot upon the sand, they sent me along my way. Bloody in heart and hand, told me my toll was paid. Oh Ma, what have I done? Left my home with golden visions, glory filled and glory bound. Did I make a wrong decision? Were my intentions so unsound? Grinding sand in my incisions, where can water here be found? Homeless, nameless, wandering pauper. Who the hell will help me now? Don't take another step until you know what you stand on. Stand strong, stand strong. What I wanna know, is there mercy? What I wanna know, is there grace? What I wanna know is, is there mercy? What I wanna know, in this place? What I wanna know is, is there kindness? What I wanna know, is there love? They can break my body. They can do me wrong. They can bruise my face. But they can't take my song.

## LYING DOWN WITH DOGS

*A fair and prosperous young man joined me, and I made him my chosen companion. He warned me against the Egyptians, against mixing with unclean people. For I was dressed as they were, so that no one would guess I had come to steal the pearl. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, V-VI*

Got'cho bright lights in Egypt land, swagger and sneer and a fisted hand. Prince of trouble, but I'm all right. Warm night, glass of wine, bright smile...hey everything is fine. Can't look back, can't see at all. Dead of night, hear Leviathan call—a voice that pours ice in my bones. Safe home, good friends, sweet wine...why should this ever end? Under sea, understand, under spell...am I still a man? Fading light, fading dreams, fading time...am I still...me? Native gone, native lie, native beam in the meat of my eye. Deep sea, warm arms...can't let go (feels like) something's wrong. There's a name on the tip of my tongue I can't remember, there's a shadow at the edge



of my sight. If you press it here, baby, it feels a little tender and I don't know how to make it...don't know how to make it...I don't know how to make it right. Wait...I know you...family? friend? I know you...what was your name again?

## MIST OF FORGETTING

*I forgot that I was a prince and became a slave to their king. I forgot all concerning the pearl for which my parents had sent me. And due to the weight of their food, I sank down into a deep sleep. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, VII*

I'm the fading man, don't remember who I am. Everything I ever loved is slipping through my fingers. Now nothing lingers. I'm the man of tears, don't remember why I'm here. It feels so safe on the bottom of the sea, feels so warm on the bottom of the bottom of the sea. Can't wake up when love is salty. Now, now and then, I break the surface of my skin. Molasses slow, no longer know when. Poised, in the middle I can't go back, can't go on. Closed, all the alternate roads. Just hear the same old songs. And I no longer dream, just watch the dust motes dancing in the beam. I'm a shooting star, don't remember who you are.

## LOVE LETTER

*After all this my parents were worried. And they wrote a letter to me, saying, "Get up, wake from your sleep! Remember that you are the son of a king! See who is your master now! Remember the pearl for which you went to Egypt!" —HYMN OF THE PEARL, IX*

Somewhere in the world, the milk has soured, and a minor key has infected the song. Somewhere in the world... I must confess, or I will have no rest, pacing these hallways, alone. There is a cave in Jericho where I will lay my bones if he does not come home. Fly to the desert sand, fly to the desolate sea, fly to the wandering hand, take this message for me: "I hope you can forgive what I didn't show, what I didn't know. Always underfoot, I guessed you always would be. But what did I know? What did I know? I pray you walk with angels wherever you go. Tell me what you're missing. What didn't I say? I give you my blessing. Oh, I know it's a little bit late. I wish I could tell you how proud I am of you. I give you my blessing..."

## REMEMBERING

*I woke and rose up from my deep sleep. I took up the letter and kissed it. I broke its seal and read it. It was as if the words had been written on my heart all along. I remembered that I was a king's son, and once again I longed for the rank that was my true nature. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, XI-XII*

A forest green, yeah a carpet at God's feet, and looking greener than it had any right to be. I was wrestling a ghost of doubt, yeah, a black cloud, hanging over me. And then the wind in the trees blew right down and spoke these words to me: Stand strong, and don't take another step 'til you know what you're standing on. Stop your crying, and take off your shoes, 'cause you're standing on diamonds. A concrete world, a forest made of stone, and in the middle of a million people, you can feel so alone. I was glancing around nervously appalled and frightened by the misery. And then the gods set in stone closed their ears when a tired landscape moaned: Stand strong... Sometimes, the darkness of a man's own heart can tear his wonder and his world apart. The things he loves becomes the things he forgets until he's changed love into something he regrets. And all the power in earth and space can't change the past and hurt it can't erase. Stand strong...



## ROMANCING THE WORM

*I remembered the pearl for which I had been sent, and I began to charm the loud-breathing worm. I lulled him to sleep, chanting over him the name of my family. And then I snatched up the pearl and turned once more toward my father's house. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, XII-XIII*

Sleep, oh it's lovely, it's all you want to do. Sleep, so delicious, the only thing that's true. Sleep—don't you, won't you, you can't resist the heaviness, the earth rising up to hold you. Sleep, that's the way you do it, just rest your scaly head. Sleep, that's a good worm, no pity for the dead. I don't know, and I don't want to know what you've got planned now for your sequel. I don't know, and I don't want to know, but it's clear you have no equal.

I'm through tempting fate, and I'm far too late and I've let it go on for too long. And so today, will always be the day when someone stole your life away. And you weren't even looking. You didn't even know. And will you even miss it when you're old?

## THE EAGLE, THE VOICE, THE LIGHT

*On the road I found the letter that had awakened me. It had flown in the form of an Eagle. Its voice had raised me up, and now with its light it led me. Written on silk, in red ink, it was shining before me, encouraging me with its guidance, with its love it drew me onward. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, XI, XIII-XIV*

I have this pearl, and now everything is clear. I've been a stupid child and I don't belong here. I'm over my head, and I'm so through with fear. I have this pearl and for the first time I can hear...hear the voices calling me home. It was a letter, it unfolds. Now it's an eagle, in its beak it holds the entrails of the worm. It was an eagle, the shards explode, becomes a light that shines upon my road. It was a light, it took me far. It sat upright and became a singing star.

## ROBED IN GLORY *(Some of the lyrics for this song were inspired by Rabbi Kook, 1865–1935)*

*As soon as I saw my glorious robe, with its sparkling splendor of colors, the Glory looked like me. I saw it in every part of me, and I saw myself in every part of it. Spurred on by love, I ran toward it, and wrapped it entirely around me. And my father the king received me with gladness. —HYMN OF THE PEARL, XVI, XVII-XX*

And now we come back to the place we began. It's not the same, but then I'm not the same man. And now we come back— ...Here come the nobles, holding out my robe, sliding over my shoulders, making me whole, making me whole. Radiant is the soul of the world, full of beauty and splendor. Radiant is the soul of the world, full of life, full of treasure. Rapture and glory, that's all I see as the veil pulls back and the leaves unfurl. Rapture and glory, oh that's all that's real. Make me feel it, come on make me feel it. Radiant is the soul of the world, full of beauty and splendor. Radiant is the soul of the world, full of life, full of treasure.

*metaphor is*  
*(from left)*

Jim Anderson, bass  
Malcolm Smith, guitars  
John Mabry, vocals  
Greg Miller, drums  
Marc Spooner, keyboards

